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Transcript

Name: Nick Schwab

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Tape: 73

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Tape FLHP0169

06:01:00

Q:

Great, okay. Well, the first question is always the hardest. If you could just give us your name and spell it.

A:

Okay. Nick, sh-, N-I-C-K, Schwab, S-C-H-W-A-B.

Q:

Great. And you can just talk to me, you can ignore that old thing in the corner over there which is the camera (laughs). Yeah, we can just have a conversation, it's much easier that way.

A:

Okay. All right. Good. All right. All right.

Q:

Um, first of all, if you could give us a little bit of background, uh, where you were born, where you live here in the area, and uh, just a little bit about your life.

06:01:23

A:

Okay, I wasn't born here. I was born in Cincinnati, was raised in Groesbeck. Uh, went to school in Cincinnati area, went to high school Roger Bacon in Cincinnati. Um, went to Ohio State, took agriculture, and came back and became, began farming in Morgan Township when I graduated from, from uh, college.

06:01:48

A:

Lived there about seven years and then bought the farm here in Reilley Township and we been here for 27 years.

Q:

Terrific. And uh, you're a trustee. Now can you tell us a little bit about uh, your involvement, you've been a trustee for 16 years.

06:02:02

A:

Been a trustee for 16 years, and our responsibilities are we have 31 miles of road, we're responsible for safety services in, in the township as well as the cemeteries. We have 3 cemeteries.

Q:

Great. And you've been in.

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A:
And, and the community center (laughs).

Q:
The community center.

A:
Right. And we have a, a school that was uh, abandoned, no longer used by the Tallawanda District, and it was given to the Township for a dollar, and it's now a Community Center. And I think last year there was over 200 things, 200 activities that took place at the Community Center, so that's part of our big job.

Q:
Wow, that's great.

06:02:43
A:
Or a big part of our job.

Q:
Is maintaining.

A:
Just Community Center, and, and we have ball fields, and, and uh, it's rented a lot for wedding receptions and, and family reunions and we have a picnic area and the ball fields.

06:03:00
Q:
Now before you bought the farm out here, you were living closer to Fernald. Can you tell us what it was like to live so close, within eye-shot of the site.

A:
I, could see it from the backyard. Uh, I didn't worry much about the plant. I knew somewhat what they did, and felt what they did there was important. So I never had a lot of concerns about it, but early on, I know my wife had concerns when there was people that came in white suits once a day and took a sample out of the creek. And we lived upwind, and 'course they said well, this was just routine. They, they do that all the time, and of course, now you'd be a little more suspicious.

Q:
How did she feel about them being completely dressed out in suits when.

06:03:52
A:
I didn't see it. My wife just told me. You know, sh-, she was upset. You know, but it didn't. I, I thought well, they probably take samples close to the site, and they're dressed that way, and they just were you know, making a large, a large sweep of the area. So, I still don't know if there was a big release that day

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or you know, what was the reason for it. But we did live uproom, upwind and they were there on the farm takin' samples when they.

06:04:21

Q:

You said you were pretty aware with what they were doing at Fernald, how did you gain that knowledge?

A:

Well, when I say pretty aware, just in a, in a real general way. When I was in high school, we had a farm in it uh, on the other side o' Brookville, Indiana. And we went out 126 to 252 to get to the farm, and we used to drive by there and I don't know, they, we just, I just thought they refined uranium there for, for fuel. For fuel, or for military use or whatever.

06:04:56

A:

I'm, I'm of the age, I guess, where that I thought that nuclear energy was really the wave of the future, and I never had any concerns about it. I just thought that was where civilization was going.

Q:

So you've been in this area since what year? When d-, when did you move here?

06:05:20

A:

W-, we moved in '64, the year before I got married. Lived with my mom and dad a year, and then we, when I got married, I moved into the farmhouse that was on the property in '65. And then we moved to Reilley Township seven years later.

Q:

So that was really the height of the Cold War at that time. I mean '60s to '70s, around there. What was the typical American's mindset during the Cold War? What were people worried about?

06:05:46

A:

Well, I think, you were concerned of the bomb, about the bomb. And you know, I always heard Cincinnati wasn't a very high target. However with that plant being there, it always seemed to me like it would be a logical place to hit. So I guess it, it brought it a little closer to home than maybe if you lived in middle of Illinois, you know.

06:06:09

Q:

And you mentioned about "duck and cover" in school. Tell us about that.

A:

Yeah, when I was in grade school, we used to have uh, bomb drills. Where they, you'd go to the, we had a one-story school, but you would go out and, in the hall and squat down, and in winter time we were supposed to take coats and put 'em over our heads. So, you know, I did live through that. So it was a, it was a, it was a, a true feeling I think at that point in time that you know, that the country was, that there was this threat of a nuclear attack.

06:06:46

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Q:

And of course, the uh, Cuban Missile Crisis uh, happened I think 1962? Yeah, 'cause, uh, can you give us a little impression about how you were feeling about that whole event?

A:

Well, it was, it was very tense. I uh, uh, was at Ohio State at that time, and you'd listen to the news, and it was, it was, it was very intense. You couldn't hardly go to class because you wanted to, you wanted to uh, you know, listen to see what was goin' on. But uh, that, that was very intense in, in the day that John Glenn went up.

06:07:24

A:

I can remember walkin' to a chemistry class, and had a little, people were carryin' little radios. And they had lost contact with him for that period of time, and they had never experienced that. And there was a great fear that they had you know, lost him, so. Tho-, those were two things, or two radio events that I remember from school.

Q:

Those were exciting times.

A:

Yeah, they were. They were.

06:07:47

Q:

Um, did you ever hear anybody that you knew in the area talk about any myths or legends or you know, just stories or rumors about the plant?

A:

No. Uh, I, I can't say that I have. Uh, it, it seemed like, and it's been too long ago that I knew some people that lived there that, it seemed like there was a higher incidents of cancer, you know, around the plant. And that was probably when we lived in Morgan Township when I became aware of that more then, so then over here because naturally, we were closer and your friends tended to be down there.

06:08:29

A:

Uh, I know that uh, we have a neighbor lives right down the road here whose dad raised, they had a truck farm down there, and her dad died from cancer at a relatively early age. And it was people like that. But as far as any other rumors or myths about the plant, no. I never heard anything.

06:08:50

Q:

And uh, how does living in, in such close proximity to the plant, how has that affected your family?

06:08:57

A:

Well, we, I don't think it has affected me, very much. I, I tend to think that you know, you go out there and you get in your car, you're liable to have a wreck, you know. And, and you know, it was where we chose to live, so, however my wife has had breast cancer, and that is, uh, it affects her a lot more. The trains that're coming through now has her upset.

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06:09:26

A:

Uh, we had two sons, probably three, but two that were, were uh, identified as lear-, learning disabled. And I think that's supposed to be one of the things that's higher in the uh, area that's normal. But uh, you know, one of 'em has, has his Masters and the other's finishing his Ph.D., so if they were learning disabled, they, they learned to compensate.

06:09:52

A:

And, and I think that was to a great extent because of my wife, she took a lot of L.D. classes and, and learned when they were young how to help, help 'em along. But you know, she, I think she tends to blame the plant, and I think well, they're related to me, and I probably was the same way. So I, you know, I don't know. But she, she tends to be concerned about the plant a lot more than I have been.

Q:

So in your estimation, um, what Fernald was doing, you've told me that you thought it was important, how did uh, Fernald's mission help America meet its goals?

06:10:27

A:

Well, I, I think that it played a real important part in our history, because the desfer-, the deterrent of what they were doing kept us from probably getting a bomb launched on us. Uh, you know, you know, hindsight is better than foresight? But I think, as they were going forward, that everything probably was done to the technology of the time, to the best technology of the time.

06:10:53

A:

And yeah, there was mistakes made. And I think that's been done all through civilization. And we're just progressing, and maybe 50 years down the road, something'll go on and even be worse 'n this. But uh, I think that, I think that uh, you know, I get the feeling that people are kind of almost ashamed that it was there?

06:11:15

A:

And, and I kind o' think that they should be proud that it was there because it played a, a part in the history of the country, and, and help make us what we are today. Yeah, there was mistakes made, and problems there, and we're livin' with those problems. But you know, that's hindsight, not foresight.

06:11:33

Q:

Great (clears throat) when you became a trustee, what did you hope to accomplish by becoming involved?

A:

Well, I, I guess I was interested in the area. Um, I had been Farm Bureau president, and, uh, County

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Farm Bureau president, and saw the political process work. Uh, during that period o' time, got to know all the commissioners on a first-name basis, and then just became interested, and, and felt that you know, maybe if I was there I could make a difference.

06:12:11

A:

Uh, I had some contacts, had been to Columbus, been to Washington, uh, and certainly Township Trustee is about as low on the political rung as you can go. But it, it's quite different than any other political office because the people votin' for ya are all your neighbors. So you have a lot o' direct contact, they feel very free to call ya about any problem. Anything at all because they, they know ya.

06:12:33

A:

But uh, I guess I hope to make a difference, and, and we've certainly seen a lot of change, but in sixteen years, you, you better seen, see some change, or you won't be in office.

Q:

So what do uh, what're some o' the things that people call you about?

06:12:52

A:

(Chuckles and looks at the camera) I don't know whether I can tell ya this or not (laughs). My first call as a trustee, right after I was elected was. We don't wanna do this.

Q:

That's okay. If you feel uncomfortable, you don't have to tell me.

A:

I can tell ya if it wasn't on there (both laugh) I don't want it on there.

Q:

Okay. (Laughing) We'll talk about it later, how's that?

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A:

(Laughing) Okay. All right. Uh, just, just anything. If the roads, the roads are bad, potholes, uh, um, you know, I got a call the other day. Some lady wanted to know how close we were to Hamilton County because it affected her insurance rates. And, I mean you just, just anything that anybody's wantin' to know, it doesn't have to be township related at all.

06:13:33

A:

Uh, I just guess you're just viewed as the closest contact to, to other people. As an intermediate almost. So you get, you get a, you know, everything from truly township problems, cemeteries, uh, when I was first trustee, we used to get a lot o' calls about the, the cemetery and the conditions of 'em, and it's been years since I've got one.

06:13:55

A:

But we, we've really worked and I think we've got some o' the finest township cemeteries in the county because of our, the present township supervisors what was the one before, so we're really quite proud of that too.

06:14:10

Q:

And as a trustee, have you ever gotten any calls from anybody that was concerned about the plant?

A:

I've never, never ever gotten a call about the plant. Now I have got some calls about the, the train that, that's going out now that's, that will be carrying the low-level radioactive waste, because it runs diagonally through the township, I have. But the plant itself, I've never got a call about.

06:14:35

Q:

Let's go ahead and talk about the waste shipping. Um, how do most o' the people that live in this area the train is going through, how do they feel about it?

A:

Well, I, I think they feel that since everything is so public today, that everything is, all the safety requirements have been met and that they're doing it in as safe a way as can be done. Uh, our, one of our big concerns has been the sight distance on 129, fear of an accident there, because uh, we have a, a, a crossing that is signalized, but at 55 miles an hour, you can't see it until you go over the crest of the hill.

06:15:20

A:

And I think they're up to what, 60 or 65 cars on the train now? And that intersect-, or that crossing from the time the lights go on until they go off will be somewhat over three minutes, because it was gonna be three minutes when the train was shorter. And with the backup o' traffic on the state highway there, we are lookin' at a, at a potential problem there.

06:15:40

A:

Uh, it um, it, that line used to be a main line to Cincinnati, and there was no accidents there. The best of

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my knowledge since I been trustee. But it, it, it is a line that's been closed, the highway's been upgraded in 252 to Brookville. There didn't used to be any truck traffic because Indiana's 252 was not suitable for truck traffic.

06:16:07

A:

And now there's a lot o' semi traffic and because o' the building in the area, developing, there's a lot of gravel trucks, concrete trucks. So it's a completely different situation than we had years ago, but uh, but that is a, that is a concern, and we've had calls about that crossing.

06:16:23

Q:

Tell us a little bit about uh, your negotiations with the Fernald plant on those crossings, and on the waste shipping.

A:

Well, I, Steve Wentzel is our liaison that comes to our meetings and keeps us abreast. And uh, you know, I, you said *negotiations*, I don't know whether that's a good word, because you know, it's just a friendly, a friendly discussion. Um, Steve's been very helpful. Uh, we have some, received some money from 'em for, for training for life squads, for fire personnel.

06:16:58

A:

Uh, you know, not necessarily just directly related with that, but just for the general welfare of the, of the community, which we're very appreciative. We're, we're sending I think three firemen from, with money that they gave us, to an advanced extrication class here coming up very shortly. So our relationship with, with the, with Steve and the plant has been excellent.

06:17:24

Q:

You mentioned the EMT and the life squad. Um, do you ever remember the Joint Response um, training that we would do at Fernald? Were you ?

A:

I don't think we were a part o' that.

Q:

Okay.

A:

Uh, it's only recently that Steve, Steve's probably been coming to our meetings for about a year. And before that, there was no, basic contact between the township and the, and the, the organization down there. But it's probably been the last year, maybe two, uh, that Steve's been, been coming to the meetings.

06:17:59

A:

And, and you know, I was just thinking also, they lent us, we, we had an EMT class held at the Community Center, so our people didn't have to drive all the way to Hamilton, and uh, you know, we were given some equipment to use by, by the plant. Uh, overheads and, and uh, screens and things like

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that the township doesn't have a continuing need for, and was supplied by them so, we appreciated that, too.

06:18:31

Q:

We're gonna go back in time a little bit and talk about the mid '80s, because there was an awful lot of media attention, especially national media attention, on the Fernald plant at that time. Because there were some dust collector releases in Plant 9 in about 1984.

Q:

And um, then uh, it sort of opened up a story um, that affected a lot o' the people that lived around the plant. Can you tell us uh, what you were going through during those years, and uh, what was going through, what was going on in the township?

06:19:02

A:

Um, the mid '80s was, was very peaceful here. You know, we are the most rural township in Butler County. Uh, this township is probably more like other ones were twenty years ago. So we really didn't have a lot o' contact. 'Course, I watched TV, read the, read the newspaper. But as far as township stand, you know, it was a very quiet period of time.

06:19:33

A:

Uh, you know, I can't remember anything in particular, when all that was being released, I mean other than reading the newspaper to keep on, keep up with what was goin' on and basically and, you know, around the plant.

06:19:46

Q:

How did you personally feel about uh, what was going on at Fernald, and the types of media attention it was getting at the time?

A:

I wondered if it was really as bad as what the media was, was saying at the time. Um, you know, the media needs to sell newspapers, they need to sell TV time. So, I, I probably was not, I was, I'm probably old enough that I thought that if the government was doin' it, it's being done right. So I guess I was skeptical of everything that was being done at that time.

06:20:26

A:

You know, the releases, you know, the fear of the release and all that. Because I think as I stated earlier I thought nuclear energy and nuclear power was the way we were goin'. When, when the uh, World's Fair was in Tennessee, I got a blank what, where it was in Tennessee. But you know, the European displays o' their nuclear reactors and, and stuff.

06:20:51

A:

I remember seeing that and thinking. "man, we are, we are really getting behind in this country. You know, we need to get going." And then I guess the other, the other thing was that, that uh, my wife's

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roommate from college, husband was a nuclear engineer, and from talking to him, you know, these are wackos out here that're so concerned about this.

06:21:15

A:

So I guess I was one o' the people more laid back, not as concerned as other people were.

Q:

Do you feel the same way now?

A:

I think, I think there's a real danger there. Yeah, I mean I think, I think what they're doin' is, is what needs to be done in cleaning up the site. If we're not gonna use it, then it, then it needs to be cleaned up. Uh, you know, it uh, I think it was important what was done when it was done. And I think it's important what's being now be done.

06:21:50

Q:

Good. Um. You've been a trustee for quite a long time and you've been in the area for quite a long time. How has your role changed from when the plant was in production to when the plant is being cleaned up? What kinds of things have, I mean as far as your duties as a trustee, have they changed at all and?

06:22:13

A:

Not, not really, no. Um, we, we're, you know, we're, we're as far from the plant in this township as anybody, well, not, not anybody in the county, but anywhere, any, any place west, um, or that's gonna take the waste because the waste is coming through, so. You know, the only thing now is that there is a certain amount of concern about that, the train.

06:22:39

A:

It um, I'm not sure whether it's comin' back through the second time or not. It came back through the township on the eastern side, but, have they changed, I'm not sure if they changed the train route, you know. Originally it went through Cincinnati, and now it's gonna be, because of the consolidations of the railroad, that's gonna go directly through Indianapolis, it's just gonna go west.

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06:23:01

A:

But it, we were, we were hearing from both sides of the township, and I haven't heard anything from the east side, so I don't know if the train route has been changed at this point or, or not. But you know, originally it went, it went to Cedar Grove and then back to Cincinnati, so it went through the township twice.

06:23:19

Q:

And why are people so concerned about the train? What do they think might happen?

06:23:22

A:

Well, it I, I think they're afraid of leaks, I think that they're afraid that's probably a lot more radioactive than what they think it is. And you know, my wife tells me well, that's natural because they didn't tell us the truth for years, so why are they telling us the truth now. So I think that's, that's the problem that they're fighting, you know, past history.

06:23:49

A:

And ah, but I mean, I would say that's basically it, ah, you know, some concern about the possibility of a derailment. This is a spur line that basically serves the plant and some other chemicals companies at Fernald, the town of Fernald. And ah, there was a lot of concern about the condition of the tracks and we still have some bad spots here in Riley that they're supposed to be looking at.

06:24:19

A:

I haven't heard that they're fixed ah, there was a culvert washed out up here on, on a farm just west of us where the tracks go through it. So, there's a few things like that, you know, it, you know. It's a long trip out, all the way out to the west, but those are all on main lines where this is a spur line so, there has been concern about the condition of the tracks.

Q:

How much of an understanding do most of the people that live in the area have about the waste shipping program?

06:24:50

A:

Ask that again.

Q:

Do they know what kind of material is going out and do they know, like with the waste pits what's gonna be happening? And do they know where it's going?

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06:25:04

A:

I, I, I can't answer that. I don't, I don't think there's a great awareness, you know. Once you get away from the tracks, there's very little concern. You know, I think, I think ah, our northeast corner of our township is very ah, Oxford oriented. And our eastern side is kind of Hamilton oriented. And you know, we're not very Cincinnati oriented, we're not used to going through Ross, you know. It's a very rural community, except for the new people that have moved out here.

06:25:48

A:

And they're basically more from Oxford than they are Cincinnati. The southern side is people from Cincinnati too, I mean, there's a little interest here.

Q:

That's something, a term that I've actually never heard before, I started doing these interviews, is NIMBY, not in my backyard.

A:

I was accused of that when they were building, trying to build the Champion landfill next door (laughing).

06:26:16

Q:

Could you tell us a little bit about that battle, I find that kind of interesting?

A:

Well, it is a paper making company in Hamilton who at that time was one of the largest employers in Hamilton, and they claimed they had to have this ah, landfill to bury their paper makings, their sludge from the paper making process.

06:26:35

A:

And they couldn't keep the plant open, and they couldn't do this and they couldn't do that and there was ah, a group of citizens that organized what was called FARMS – Families Against Morgan and Riley Sites, you know, kind of. You know they were not NIMBYs in the.

(A piece of the equipment falls in front of the interviewee)

Q:

Woe, yikes. It's in the way.

(Tape stops and is changed)

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07:01:00

Q:

It's okay, I'll ask you that question again.

(Cameraman – we're rolling)

07:01:04

Q:

Okay, if you could tell me a little bit about the Champion landfill that almost happened here in the area.

A:

Okay it was a, Champion is a paper making company in Hamilton, who at that time was one of the major employers in Hamilton. And ah, they came out here and decided they wanted a landfill for their paper making waste and ah, the people in the neighborhood felt that it would decrease their property values but they also felt that the site was very poorly chosen.

07:01:38

A:

It was chosen for political reasons rather than scientific reasons. And when they first started, they talked about having to raise 40,000 dollars to fight this effort. And I think by the time they were done they had raised and spent something like 120,000 dollars to fight the effort. Ah, but there is a finger of the aquifer that comes up and is underneath that site and it was not a good site.

07:02:06

A:

And ah, but you know, the governor was interested in jobs, the political higher ups in the county was interested in jobs and Champion keep saying, "well, if we can't have the landfill, we're gonna have to pull out of Butler County." So it was a very tense, political time but it was, it was not in my backyard, it was in some ways. But it was not here because there were good reasons it shouldn't be here.

07:02:36

A:

It was never just an emotional, it was an emotional thing but the arguments were not emotional arguments. And it kind of culminated in a zoning fight. Riley Township had county zoning at that time and we went to township zoning. Because of the fact that the case, they needed a variance to put it there and it went before the county board and the county members were all basically from other parts of the county, not here, out here at all.

07:03:08

A:

And we felt they were just influenced by we need to keep the jobs in Butler County. Ah, ah, and then Morgan Township, was on the other side of the road, and they were completely un-zoned. And they, we both adopted township zoning at that time. Ah, we basically were told there's not enough people here to have your own zoning, but we, we've had it now for 10 years, that was 1989.

07:03:33

A:

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And we've got along very well. But in the, in the zoning fight to try to defeat the zoning, Champion spent \$650,000 according to the, the ah, election report here, the expense report that you had to file. Which was enough to elect someone to Congress at that time. That's what it took to run a congressional campaign.

07:03:57

A:

And that was spent in a township of 25,000 people and ah, the opposing side spent \$650 and needless to say, that, that the people of the township prevailed and voted in township zoning. And, and all I did was i-, if any changes needed to be made, then they had to come to a board made up of people of the, of the township.

07:04:21

A:

But the, after, after everything was done, it's a licensed landfill, but the first load of waste has never been put in there. Uh, they've got millions o' dollars invested in it, and you know, hopefully it'll never be used, because it was not a, it was not a good site to start with. And uh, I think there's a lot o' truth that they're afraid to use it because of future liability, because you're responsible now for what you do to the environment.

07:04:56

Q:

And a lot o' that uh, feeling about the landfill, and the sort of, I guess people call it NIMBY-ism (chuckles). Does that uh, ever happen with the trains coming through, from Fernald?

A:

I've never heard it. No.

Q:

So people don't have that sort of NIMBY mindset when it comes, to, to the trains.

07:05:14

A:

No, I think the, the tracks 're here. It's, it's a fact of life. You know, uh, we're worried, I mean you know, basically, it's a rural community, so the people along the tracks are the same as have lived there all those years. If they hauled all that stuff in, you know, and the other chemical plants down there at Fernald.

07:05:34

A:

That, the train that derailed at Miamisburg a few years ago with the white, what was it, white phosphorous on that caused all the trouble? Would've come through our tracks if it hadn't, if it hadn't derailed up there. So you know, there's a certain amount of risk if you live along the track, and it's been here, so now I, I, I think there's a pretty much level of confidence with what's going on at this time.

07:06:00

Q:

Great. And uh, what was, as a trustee, you've uh, probably toured the site before.

A:

Yes I have.

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Q:
What was your very first impression during a tour of the site?

07:06:10

A:
My very first impression was how totally large it was. You **know, whoever decided the site it there was a genius, because you drove by, and you, and like, I would imagine, unless you worked there, you had no idea to what extent that facility was.** I mean, I used to drive by there as a, as a teenager goin' out to Indiana, and, and you saw it, and it was down in a valley.

07:06:33

A:
And it, it, it just didn't, it just didn't look like it was that large. And when I toured the site, that, it was almost just, unbelievable. I, you know, 'cause, I thought, "well, how did they fit all this down here, and you can't." You know, it's basically hidden. It was a very well-chosen site from that standpoint.

07:06:53

Q:
And what about the interior of the plant? Some of the uh, actual, well, what year did you first go through it?

A:
'98

(Both laughing)

Q:
Oh, was it just last year?

A:
Maybe '99. No, I, I haven't, you know, I. We, Steve Wentzel, uh, we, we toured one day with him. And it was basically in a shutdown phase. I don't think we were in a actual, in any of the actual buildings being torn down. We saw some of 'em. And the, you know, the pits, and, and the you know, the new. I don't know what you wanna. You don't, they call the new burial sites, the pits.

07:07:31

A:
I guess they do. And, and the liner, we saw how the liner was being constructed and things like that. But um, uh, the rail yard was, was completed, but there was no cars there, you know, that. And I understand what that was the largest rail yard that's been constructed in the United States in several years. So it, the uh, the size of it was totally amazing. That's what just took me totally off guard, the size, the complexity, and every, everything worked, I mean everything that went on there.

07:08:07

Q:
Great. And uh, how do you feel about the Fernald cleanup right now? What's going on at the site right now?

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A:

I, I think it's something that needs to be done. I think it's probably bein' done to the best technology that we have today. The, the plant that they were gonna make the glass beads evidently didn't, didn't work out, but I mean we're into new, new technology. Uh, um, you know, I, I feel good about it. It needs to be done. I think it's bein' done.

07:08:42

A:

You know, 50 years from now, people probably say, "oh, they made, this was a mistake. They should a saw this." But you know, I think today, everything is being done about as well as you could hope to have it done.

07:08:54

Q:

And how do you feel about the uh, class action suit that was filed on behalf of the citizens that lived around Fernald?

A:

H-, how do I feel? Well, they were evidently justified or they wouldn't a been awarded the money, you know. Um, we did live in that area, so we have been compensated to a certain extent, by that money because we had lived there during that period of time. So you know, we have shared in it. Uh, uh, not from property, but from mental anguish, I guess.

07:09:34

A:

And uh, my wife was compensated, not a large amount, but uh, an amount. And mine was much less. In fact, they had me go see a psychiatrist, because they thought I should a suffered more damage than I did because o' my wife, and my feeling is, like I told ya before. It was, it was a part o' history. It was what was needed to be done then. We chose to live here.

07:10:06

A:

I mean if you chose to live someplace else, you might get hit by a car, you know? And uh, so I guess they decided I was sane because they didn't (laughing) compensate me anything further. But they did, they did uh, have me go see a psychiatrist. But I mean, I, maybe it's my age, and, and where I lived.

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07:10:27

A:

But you know, I think that site is a part o' history, and should not be looked down upon, because I think it benefited the whole country. Yeah, we got problems, but those prob-, none o' those problems were done intentionally, I don't think. I don't think there was any intent to say, "well, we'll locate it here and these 're the people that they're gonna be harmed."

07:10:48

A:

So, I think the class-action suit you know, people were harmed. It was not an intentional harm, but uh, uh, you know, I, I probably just have a different view than a lot o' people, and it's probably age related. I don't know.

07:11:8

Q:

Did you think the money was distributed fairly?

A:

I guess the money just wasn't that important to me. I you know, I wasn't involved in it. They said, "this is what you have coming" ah, I don't resent in anyway what somebody else got. Ah, you know, I wish they'd have given me more (chuckles) wish they'd have thought there was something wrong with me and said you know, you were really damaged.

07:11:34

A:

But you know, no I don't, I, I, you know, I suppose it was, if it wasn't distributed fairly ah, that's somebody else's problem, you know. I, I just wasn't that involved in it and, and ah, was very surprised when, when we got something, you know.

07:11:54

Q:

Tell us a little bit about the visit to the psychologist. I know that some people have gone through that, I just, what was that like?

A:

(Laughing) She kept telling me, are you sure that's the way you feel? You certainly have a wonderful attitude, you know, they kept asking me these questions. And, and, and ah, I'd tell 'em about my wife and I'd tell 'em how I felt, but I'd, I'd, I went in and tried to answer the questions truthfully and, and ah, when I was waiting there, there was some other people that were very emotionally distraught.

07:12:24

A:

And I kept thinking my gosh, are these people really that bad. How, how did they live that long? You know ah, and, and, so I, I, it's the only time in my life that I've been to a psychologist (laughing) you know. I don't know if they help you or not, but they just kept saying well, you know. Well they kept asking me, now you're sure this, and they'd go at it another way, and, and ah, you know, it just ah, I just answered the questions truthfully.

07:12:55

Q:

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That's interesting. I've heard a couple of stories about that.

A:

Probably quite different (laughing) I don't know.

Q:

What was your experience with site workers? Did you know any people in the area?

A:

Just Ed Dillhoff, who we talked about or off camera maybe earlier. Ah, or I, I knew Ed, ah, I can remember a point in time when he thought everything done there was done safe that this was a bunch of smoke about nothing and then I think over a period of time his attitude changed. And then I know you told me you talked to him, so I really don't know, but he's the only one that I really knew that worked there.

07:13:38

A:

And in the earlier years I think he was very comfortable about what was being done there and safety for the workers and then his attitude changed as time went on.

Q:

Great and ah, they're tearing all those buildings down as you well know from your recent tour and ah, what would you like seen, what would you like to see done with that land when all the buildings are gone?

07:14:07

A:

Well I guess that to a large extent, ah, you know, depends on how safe it is and I think it's gonna be totally safe you know, whether it should be open to the public or not, I don't know. Ah, you know, there's a big push on right now for green space, you know. Ah, if you live out here you don't feel there's a, a ah, shortage of wildlife, but a lot of people in more urban areas feel that there is.

07:14:38

A:

You know, you know, our big chore on Sundays is getting to church without hitting a deer. I mean, and other people drive to see one and, and more times than not we'll have deer cross us on the way to church on Sunday mornings. So, you know, we have coyotes, we have, we have everything. We had a fox that had, oh I can't think what you call a litter of fox, in the barn this year. So I mean, we definitely, we definitely have wildlife.

07:15:08

A:

But I would think that I don't know if it could be a recreational area, you know, to what extent it can be opened to the public or whatever, I don't, I don't know. But probably, probably that's what I'd like a see it used for; green space probably and then opened to the public to whatever extent is safe, you know.

Q:

And ah, did they explain much to you about the On-Site Disposal Facility?

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A:

We saw the pits that are being dug and they were working on installing liner and gluing the sections, and I'm somewhat familiar with that, because it's very similar to what's been installed at the Champion landfill site here. We, you know, the leachate collection system underneath and it, everything is very, very similar to this and you know, the trouble is I don't know whether there's ever one that's been built that hasn't leaked and it's my understanding they've had trouble with the one down there that's leaked so.

07:16:02

A:

But ah, you know, you use the best technology and hopefully you've got the best contractors and the best people doing the job and you have to work from there. But ah, I'm, I'm somewhat familiar, you know, ah with the On-Site Disposal, what they're doing.

Q:

How do you feel about keeping some of that waste on site?

07:16:26

A:

Well, I think it's been determined by today's technology that it's relatively safe and you know, it's been here all along, it's being disposed of properly and ah, you know, you asked me before about the NIMBY ss-, you know, the NIMBY and, ah maybe 'cause it's not right in my backyard, but I, I really don't have any problem. I think it's, it's probably the thing that should be done.

07:16:54

A:

I mean, ah, you know, do you really want to send it and put in someone else's backyard. It is gonna be in someone's backyard and if it's safe here then why should it all, why should it all be moved.

Q:

Good, good and ah, how do you feel about preserving some of the history of the Cold War by preserving some of the history of Fernald?

07:17:18

A:

I think, I think it would be you know, a good idea, you know. Because you know, I've, I've, maybe it's my age but I, you know, I lived through it. And I think today young people don't really realize what we went through, you know. There's no, ah, physical evidence of this Cold War that's ever gone on. I mean, you know, you can't go and look and say well that site was bombed or, or this happened.

07:17:43

A:

And, and, you know, I think, I think that would be a good idea to preserve you know, is, something there that can delude you know, ah, as what went on at the time.

Q:

Good, good. Can you tell us a little bit about the medical monitoring system that's set up?

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A:

Ah, I believe, I believe it's every 2 years that we go for a complete physical and ah, my wife is having hers this morning and ah, mine is scheduled for next month. It's a very complete physical, it's you know, it's not mandatory, if you want to go, fine. And ah, I think why not. They check you all out and, and they're, I imagine ah, collecting data that can be helpful to everybody, so.

07:18:35

A:

You know, it's helpful to you at the present time and ah, I think, you know, if they do collect medical data from the people that lived around there, that, you know, it could help us in the future sometime.

Q:

Great, is there anything that we didn't cover that you wanted to cover? Anything you want to add?

07:18:55

A:

Not that I can think of, (laughing) you asked me about all kinds of things that I didn't think you were going to. No, it ah, you know, it ah, you know, I you know, the sites there. It's a part of our history, you know, and ah, mistakes were made but been mistakes made all, all through our history I guess. And, and you know, I don't think there was ever any intentional harm to hurt anybody, you know. So, I think you pretty well covered it, I can't, I can't think of anything else that I'd want to add.

Q:

Great, we're going to do now what we call natural sound. That just means that we have to be quiet on the set for about 30 seconds. This is nat sound.